

Volunteers join hands for collection

By Chris Aponick

Volunteers representing six of Lincoln's human service agencies gathered outside Haymarket Park on Saturday to try something different: a collaborative collection drive.

The Bridge, Cedars Youth Services, the Friendship Home, the Fresh Start Home, the Lincoln Action Program and the Matt Talbot Kitchen & Outreach are set to receive the supplies donated before and after the Nebraska baseball game against Texas A&M.

The drive was one of many projects going on in Lincoln as part of the nationwide JoinHands Day, which encourages volunteerism, said Martha Hakenkamp of Volunteer Partners, a group that participated in the Haymarket project.

A group of Omaha-based Marine reservists built a playground at Lincoln's Sheridan Lutheran Church, 6955 Old Cheney Road, said Jenny Malone, director of Sheridan Lutheran's Child Development Center.

"It's a fast way to get things done," Malone said.

AmeriCorps volunteers built white wooden flower boxes and painted flowerpots, AmeriCorps member Chris Hall said.

Hakenkamp is participating in Join Hands Day for the third year. She said the event grows yearly.

"This year, we have T-shirts. We're moving on up," Hakenkamp said.

The groups sought supplies that are nearly essential to the people they help.

The donations included new socks and underwear, personal care products, diapers and wet wipes, cleaning and basic first aid supplies and paper products such as towels and bathroom tissue.

"We call it a fix for self-sufficiency," Hakenkamp said.

Husker baseball fan Jean Lynn learned about the drive when an e-mail was sent out by the Husker Home run Club.

"We enjoy helping those who don't have the means to do it," Lynn said.

But the fans at Haymarket Park weren't the only resource the group relied on. Wal-Mart, Walgreens and Dollar Tree Stores put out collection barrels for more than two weeks, Hakenkamp said.

The local United Way office, 206 S. 13th St, Suite 100; YWCA, 1432 N St.; the Russ's Market at 1550 S. Coddington Ave.; and Messiah Lutheran Church, 1800 S. 84th St., will accept donations through today, she said.

Volunteer Audra Nabity, 10, said providing things needed around the house to the less fortunate was an

important goal.

"This is pretty much the only way they are going to get it,"she said.

Audra's mother, Kristin Roche, said the event should help many people, so it's vital to continue the event after a good first effort.

"We want to start planning for next year early."

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